

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6907

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 0645

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, IV

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE CABINET CHANGES

REF: ABIDJAN 461

1. ATTACKS ON CERTAIN MINISTERS DURING DIALOGUE 74 HAVE PRODUCED CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION HERE OVER IMPENDING CHANGES IN THE CABINET.THE EMBASSY UNDERSTANDSFOLLOWING MINISTERS WERE ACCUSED.

A. AG MIN SAWADOGO: HOUPHOUET'S STRONG PERSONAL ATTACK IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN JOINED BY ONES MADE BYSTAFF MEMBERS OF THAT MINISTRY. ALTHOUGH GROUNDS SAID TO BE SAWADOGO'S POOR RUNNING OF ORGANIZATION, FRENCH EMBASSY HAS HEARD REAL REASON FOR LONG-STANDING OPPOSITION AMONG HIS SUBORDINATES IS ETHNIC ONE, SAWADOGO IS OF VOLTAN ORIGIN. (ONE OFFICIAL SAID SAWADOGO, AS WELL AS INTERIOR MIN NANLO BAMBA, ALSO ACCUSED OF BEING DELINQUENT IN PAYING TAXES.) INTERESTINGLY, SAWADOGO WHEN MEETING WITH AMERICAN DELEGATION OF COCOA BUYERS JANUARY 24 REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES THAT HIS "SUCCESSOR WILL FOLLOW SAME POLICY." SAID TO BE WAITING IN THE WINGS ARE STATE CORPORATION SATMACI HEAD BRA KANON,

WHO THOUGHT HE SHOULD HAVE HAD MINISTRY WHEN SAWADOGO WAS NAMED IN 1968, AND ABDOULAYE FADIGA, HEAD OF MINISTRY'S STABILIZATION FUND.

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B. MIN INFO BOUAZO: SOUMAHORO, IN HIS VICIOUS ATTACK REPORTED

REFTEL, ACCUSED BOUAZO OF GROSS CORRUPTION AND INCOMPETENCE, AS WELL AS ETHNICISM AND CRONYISM. ALTHOUGH SOUMAHORO AND BOUAZO HAVE BEEN ENEMIES FOR YEARS, EMBASSY HAS IMPRESSION THERE CONSIDERABLE TRUTH IN THE CHARGES. THERE HAS BEEN SOME SURPRISE EXPRESSED THAT BOUAZO DID NOT RESIGN IN ORDER TO SETTLE "AS A MAN" WITH SOUMAHORO.

C. MIN PUBLIC WORKS KADJI GRAH: STORIES HAVE CIRCULATED THAT GRAH IS A VERY GOOD TECHNICIAN BUT MAKES LIFE DIFFICULT FOR THOSE HAVING TO WORK UNDER HIM.

D. HEALTH MIN AYE: ACCUSED OF RUNNING A POOR ORGANIZATION.

2. MOST PEOPLE WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN AGREE THAT THESE FOUR ARE IN GREATEST DANGER OF LOSING THEIR JOBS. THERE IS ALSO A RUMOR THAT PTT MIN CISSOKO'S FUTURE IS NOT ASSURED BECAUSE OF CRITICISM OF HIS MINISTRY'S OPERATION. FINALLY, THERE IS SPECULATION NOW, AS THERE WAS A YEAR AGO, THAT MIN PLAN DIAWARA, BELIEVING HE HAS DONE ALL HE CAN HERE AND USING THE CURRENT YEAR 2000 LOOK INTO THE FUTURE AS HIS SWANSONG, IS CASTING ABOUT FOR A POST WITH AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION.

3. CRITICISM OF HOUPHOUET FOR ALLOWING ATTACKS ON MINISTERS TO TAKE PLACE HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD. A MEMBER OF POLITICAL BUREAU TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT PRESIDENT, AWARE OF THIS MOOD, FELT CONSTRAINED IN HIS CLOSING REMARKS ON JANUARY 21 TO DENY THAT IT WAS AT ALL HIS INTENTION TO USE THE DIALOGUES AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET RID OF ANYONE, THAT HE JUST WANTED EVERYTHING OUT INTO THE OPEN. OUR INFORMANT INDICATED THAT THE ASSEMBLY WAS NOT SATISFIED BY THOSE REMARKS, AND CRITICISM CONTINUED THAT A PRESIDENT CAN RESHUFFLE HIS CABINET ANYTIME HE PLEASES AND NEEDS NO EXCUSE SUCH AS THIS TO DO IT.

4. POLITICAL BUREAU MEMBER DON-FOLOGO FELT OBLIGED TO INCLUDE IN HIS POST-DIALOGUE EDITORIAL DEFENSE OF CADRE WHO ATTACHED MINISTERS. AFTER PRAISING COURAGE OF CIVIL SERVANTS, HE SAID THEIR AIM WAS NOT TO GET RID OF CERTAIN MINISTERS. COUNTRY WANTS TO KEEP GOOD ONES BUT ELIMINATE THOSE WHO ARE INCOMPETENT, SELFISH, TRIBALISTIC, NEPOTISTIC, AND CORRUPT.

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5. OPINION OF INFORMED IVORIANS AND EXPERIENCED FOREIGN OBSERVERS TENDS TO AGREE THERE WILL MOSTLY LIKELY BE CHANGES IN CABINET, BUT ONLY AFTER A RESPECTABLE INTERVAL OF TIME HAS PASSED. ONE DEPUTY, FOR EXAMPLE, SAID HE THOUGHT IT WOULD COME AFTER 2-3 MONTHS. (MOST RECENT CABINET CHANGES OCCURRED IN 1971.) PERENNIAL RUMOR THAT HOUPHOUET IS ABOUT TO NAME A PRIME MINISTER WHO COULD RELIEVE HIM OF MUCH OF THE DAILY BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT IS ALSO CIRCULATING AGAIN. POLITICAL BUREAU MEMBER QUOTED PARA.3

REMINDED US THAT, WITH HOUPHOUET, ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN AT
ANYTIME: THE MAN IS WHOLLY HIS OWN BOSS.

6. AIRGRAM ON RESULTS OF DIALOGUE 74 BEING TRANSMITTED THIS WEEK'S
POUCH.
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